

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00698 261421Z

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PRS-01 PA-01 SS-15

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USIA-06 /080 W

-----270238Z 055759 /75

R 261333Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4415

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0698

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, EG, LY

SUBJ: POSSIBLE EXPULSION OF EGYPTIAN WORKERS FROM LIBYA

SUMMARY. TRIPOLI MOMENTARILY WITNESSING GROWING SPECULATION THAT QADHAFI WILL ORDER MASS EXPULSION OF EGYPTIAN WORKERS. LOCAL COMMITTEES OF PEOPLE'S CONGRESSES MEETING SINCE MAY 3. TO DECIDE ISSUE. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED MEDIA COVERAGE OF MEETINGS SUGGEST EXPULSION IMMINENT. MEETING AND MEDIA REPORTING SPECULATED TO BE QADHAFI PLOY TO PRESSURE SADAT INTO MUZZLING EGYPTIAN MEDIA. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE THE CONVENING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF LIBYA'S BASIC PEOPLE'S CONGRESSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. MAY 3, THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING SPECULATION THAT THE COMMITTEES WILL RECOMMEND THE EXPULSION OF
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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00698 261421Z

EGYPTIAN WORKERS FROM LIBYA. CAREFULLY EDITED GOVERNMENT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS GIVE IMPRESSION MAJORITY OF LIBYANS ARE IN FAVOR OF EXPULSION. HOWEVER, MEDIA REFLECTION OF CONGRESSES SENTIMENT REPORTEDLY CONTRADICTS ATTITUDE OF LIBYANS IN BENGHAZI AND OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. MEDIA REPORTING UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTS POSITION EXPRESSED

BY COLONEL QADHAFI DURING MAY 1 SPEECH. QADHAFI INDICATED THAT HE FAVORED THE EXPULSION OF EGYPTIAN WORKERS BUT HIS WAS A DECISION FOR THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. FURTHER, HEIGHTENING THIS SPECULATION HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO RENEW WORK PERMITS OF EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN PROFESSIONALS. AS A RESULT OF THIS REFUSAL, MANY SYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS HAVE REPORTEDLY DECIDED TO LEAVE LIBYA IN ANTICIPATION OF THE EXPULSION DECISION BY THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS.

2. IT IS ALSO SPECULATED IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THIS CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED ATTEMPT TO CREATE APPREHENSION AMONGST NEARLY A QUARTER OF A MILLION EGYPTIAN WORKERS IN LIBYA IS AIMED AT PRESSURING THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT INTO ENDING ITS MEDIA CAMPAIGN AGAINST COLONEL QADHAFI. THE CONSPICUOUS PRESENCE OF EAST EUROPEAN PROFESSIONALS IN POSITIONS NORMALLY HELD BY EGYPTIANS HAS ALSO ADDED SUBSTANCE TO THESE RUMORS. IN THIS CONNECTION, MAJOR JALLUD'S TRIP TO EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WAS REPORTEDLY AIMED AT RECRUITING EAST EUROPEAN PROFESSIONALS TO REPLACE EGYPTIANS.

3. THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT'S PRETEXT FOR THE THREATENED EXPULSION OF EGYPTIAN WORKERS REST ON THE ALLEGATION THAT SADAT IS USING THEIR PRESENCE AS A POLITICAL LEVER TO FURTHER WIDEN THE GAP IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. LOCAL MEDIA CONSISTENTLY
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PAGE 03 TRIPOL 00698 261421Z

EXPRESSED "DISMAY AND APPREHENSION" AT THE REPEATED ALLEGATIONS OF SADAT AND OTHER EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS THAT THE EGYPTIAN WORKERS HERE ARE BEING MISTREATED. WHATEVER QADHAFI'S DECISION, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THERE EXISTS AN AIR OF CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION AMONGST EGYPTIANS OVER THEIR FATE IN LIBYA.
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